

**REMARKS**

**Formalities**

With this Amendment, Applicants cancel claims 4, 33, 34, and 36. Therefore, claims 1-3, 4-32, 35, and 37-42 are all the claims pending in this Application. Claims 40-42 are withdrawn. Therefore, claims 1-3, 4-32, 35, and 37-39 are all the claims currently under consideration in this Application. Applicants note that the Examiner incorrectly lists only claims 1-39 as currently pending.

In the current Office Action, The Examiner acknowledges Applicants' claims to foreign priority and the receipt of the certified copy of the priority documents. The Examiner also returns a signed and initialed copy of the Form PTO-SB-08 submitted with the Information Disclosure statement of December 8, 2003.

**Title**

The title of the invention stands objected to as not descriptive. With this Amendment, Applicants amend the title and respectfully request that the objection thereto be reconsidered and withdrawn.

**Claim Objections**

Claims 1-34 are objected to due to informalities. Specifically, the Examiner indicates that claims 1-34 recite a "secondary" transfer member and do not recite a primary transfer member. With this Amendment, Applicants amend claims 1-3, 5-7, 9, 11, 12, 15, 16, 18-20, 22, 23, 26, 27, and 29-32 to correct these informalities. Applicants respectfully submit that these amendments are not intended to narrow the scope of the original claims, but are rather for precision of

language and to explicitly recite within the claim what was believed to have already been implicitly defined therein. Accordingly, these amendments do not foreclose application of reasonable equivalents.

Applicants respectfully request that the objections to the claims be reconsidered and withdrawn.

#### **Allowable Subject Matter**

The Examiner indicates that claims 2, 3, 5-7, 9-30, 34, 36, and 39 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten into independent form including the limitations of the claims from which they depend.

With this Amendment, Applicants re-write claims 2, 9, 20, and 39 into independent form. Claims 3, 10-19, and 21-30 depend from these claims. Applicants amend claim 31 to include the limitations of claim 33 and allowable claim 34. Claim 32 depends from claim 31. Applicants amend claim 35 to include the limitations of allowable claim 36. Claims 37 and 38 depend from claim 35.

In view of the above amendments, Applicants submit that claims 2, 3, 9-32, 35, and 37-39 are allowable.

#### **Claim Rejections**

Claims 35, 37, and 38 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly anticipated by Ryusaki (JP 408114995). Claim 37 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Ryusaki, in view of Sameshima. As discussed above, claim 35 is amended to

include the limitations of allowable claim 36 and claims 37 and 38 depend from claim 35.

Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested.

Claims 31 and 32 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly anticipated by Yamazaki (JP 411288178). As discussed above, claim 31 is amended to include the limitations of claim 33 and allowable claim 34 and claim 32 depends from claim 31. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 33 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Yamazaki, in view of Sameshima (U.S. Patent No. 5,983,062). Claim 33 is cancelled.

Claims 1, 4, and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Ryusaki, in view of Sameshima. With this Amendment, Applicants amend claim 1 to include the limitations of claim 4. Claim 4 is cancelled and claim 8 is amended to depend from claim 1. Applicants submit that the cited combination of references fails to teach or suggest at least “bringing the transfer member into contact with a first widthwise end portion of the belt member first” and that “the cleaning member is brought into contact with the first widthwise end portion of the belt member first,” as recited in claim 1, as amended. In other words, the references fail to teach or suggest that both the transfer member and the cleaning member are first brought into contact with the same end (the first widthwise end portion) of the belt member.

Therefore, in view of the above, Applicants submit that claim 1 is patentable over the cited combination of references and that claim 8 is patentable at least by virtue of its dependence on claim 1. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1 and 8 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

**Conclusion**

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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